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# News Releases and other News Material

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

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## News Releases-

Release No. 0154.94  
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### USDA SETS HEARING ON PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO FILBERTS/HAZELNUTS MARKETING ORDER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced a public hearing on proposals to amend the federal marketing order for filberts/hazelnuts grown in Oregon and Washington. The hearing will be held March 8 in Newberg, Ore., at 9:00 a.m. in the Shiloh Inn, 501 East Sitka Ave.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said that for the amendments to take effect, USDA must agree that the amendments would improve operations of the order. A referendum would then be conducted to give filbert/hazelnut growers an opportunity to vote on the amendments.

The proposed amendments have been submitted by the Filbert/Hazelnut Marketing Board, which administers the order locally. The amendments are designed to improve the administration, functions and operations of the marketing order program.

The amendments would:

- replace the term "filberts/hazelnuts" with the term "hazelnuts;"
- include Hawaii in the domestic market distribution area and allow for future changes in the distribution area through informal rulemaking;
- change the term of office for grower and handler members from one year to two years and make corresponding changes in membership nomination provisions;
- change the procedure for calculating a handler's minimum weighted vote when voting on board member nominations;
- allow confirmation of board telephone votes at the next meeting rather than confirmation in writing;
- allow written summary reports of board marketing policy meetings rather than verbatim reports;
- increase the board's flexibility in determining the amount of the product released to the market under volume regulations;
- allow the board to establish different identification standards for shipments than those currently used;
- correct provisions for determining handler credit for product withheld under the volume regulations;
- revise the method of determining the bonding rate for handlers who delay withholding product and change what the board purchases with defaulted bond payments;
- clarify the exemption provision regarding mail order sales;
- amend the assessment provision to allow the board to accept advance assessment payments and, with USDA approval, authorize the board to provide payment discounts to handlers making advance assessment payments; and
- allow the board to borrow money early in the fiscal period and accept contributions to be used for production and market research projects.

Other USDA proposals have been included to ensure consistency among the order provisions.

The proposals and the notice of hearing are scheduled for publication in the Feb. 28 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from Mark Slupek, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, Rm. 2523-S, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; tel. (202) 205-2830, or fax (202) 720-5698.

Copies may also be obtained from Teresa Hutchinson, Northwest Marketing Field Office, 1220 SW Third St., Rm. 369, Portland, Ore. 97204; tel. (503) 326-2724 or fax (503) 326-7440.





Release No. 0155.94  
Ed Curlett (301)436-7255  
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## **USDA APPROVES NEW TREATMENT FOR MEXICAN MANGOES AND GRAPEFRUIT**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28--The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that it has approved the use of a high-temperature forced-air treatment for grapefruit and mangoes imported from Mexico.

"Today's action will provide importers of Mexican mangoes and grapefruit an additional treatment alternative to ensure that these imports are free of damaging pests and disease organisms that could affect our agriculture," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator of plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The new treatment consists of placing boxes of grapefruit and mangoes into heated forced-air chambers until the fruit's core reaches 118 degrees F.

"High-temperature forced-air treatments provide for longer fruit shelf life than do hot-water or vapor-heat treatments," said Lee. "We anticipate that some private treatment enterprises will convert their facilities to use this treatment."

The high-temperature forced-air treatments were developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. The treatments are effective against the Mexican fruit fly in grapefruit imported from Mexico and against the Mexican, West Indian, and black fruit flies in mangoes imported from Mexico.

The final rule is scheduled for publication in the Feb. 28 Federal Register and takes effect on April 29.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is accepting comments on this action if they are received on or before March 30. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-028-2 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 So. Bldg, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.



Release No. 0156.94  
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## **USDA IMPROVES PROCEDURES FOR ACCESSING AND USING ANIMAL IMPORT CENTER**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's today announced amended regulations to improve the requirements for access and use of its Harry S Truman Animal Import Center (HSTAIC) in the Florida Keys.

"These changes will open our high-security quarantine facility at Fleming Key, Fla., to more animal importers than in the past" said Donald Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

APHIS accepts applications from animal importers and holds an annual lottery to allocate space in the import center, Luchsinger said. The prospective importers must now include a deposit of \$32,000 in cash, certified check or money order instead of a \$50,000 letter of credit. APHIS receives about 230 applications each year, but many are duplicates from large importers.

"Our new system will assist small importing companies who could not previously afford to use the center and will discourage large importers from submitting multiple applications," Luchsinger said.

Luchsinger said it costs about \$32,000 a month to maintain HSTAIC in readiness to accept imported animals for quarantine. In recent years, HSTAIC has been used for an average of one importation annually.

"The revised regulations, which apply to the lottery to be held in 1994, also will reduce APHIS' cost of maintaining the facility by allowing more frequent use of the center," Luchsinger said.

Money from the deposit will be applied to the costs of qualifying animals for importation through the center and to expenses incurred for maintaining the center before the importers enter into a cooperative agreement with APHIS.

In another change, the lottery system will no longer give preference to cattle, sheep, goats and swine from countries infected with foot-and-mouth disease. In the future, APHIS will put all applicants into one pool.

The final rule is scheduled for publication in the March 1 Federal Register. These regulatory changes will become effective for the 1994 lottery to be held on Aug. 31 for importations during 1995.



Release No. 0157.94

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#### **USDA RELAXES RESTRICTIONS ON FRUIT AND VEGETABLE IMPORTS FROM AREAS IN MEXICO**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it is adding San Luis Rio Colorado to the list of areas in Sonora, Mexico, from which approved fruits and vegetables may enter the United States without treatment for plant pests.

"This regulatory change will allow apples, apricots, grapefruit, oranges, peaches, persimmons, pomegranates and tangerines to be imported into the United States from the San Luis Rio Colorado area of Mexico without treatment for plant pests," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator of plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The San Luis Rio Colorado area of Sonora, Mexico, is free of major crop-destroying insects, including the Mediterranean, Mexican and Oriental fruit flies, all of which could endanger U.S. domestic production.

"Mexican agricultural officials perform intensive fruit-fly trapping surveys adequate to detect any fruit-fly infestations in San Luis Rio Colorado." Lee added.

In finalizing this regulation change, APHIS determined that only imports of oranges, peaches and possibly grapefruit could increase, and the increase would be insignificant. The USDA projected that if imports of oranges and peaches from Sonora and imports of grapefruit from Mexico were to increase by 10 percent from 1992 levels, this increase would amount to less than 1 percent of total U.S. production and less than 1 percent of total U.S. imports of these commodities.

The final rule becomes on effective on publication in the Federal Register, which is scheduled for Feb. 28.





**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DAY CELEBRATION TO FEATURE EXHIBITS ON NEW PRODUCTS,  
NEW USES FOR AGRICULTURAL MATERIALS**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28--Some 40 exhibits, featuring new products and new uses for agricultural materials, will be part of the National Agricultural Day celebration in Washington, D.C. March 17, 1994. They range from using soybeans for diesel fuel, to corn as windshield washer fluid, to wheat straw as walls for homes, to biodegradable polymers made from potato, wheat or corn starch.

According to Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy, the honorary chairman of the event, "We are very pleased the Agricultural Council of America, the event's sponsor, has chosen the theme of new products and new uses for agricultural materials. Many USDA agencies have ongoing research, development and commercialization projects with private sector partners."

One USDA agency, the Alternative Agricultural Research and Commercial-ization (AARC) Center invested \$9 million, matched by \$25 million from private partners, in 23 projects last year to promote new, innovative and environmentally friendly uses for farm and forestry materials. The AARC Center requires at least 50 percent match for these pre-commercial activities from the private sector partner and negotiates a payback arrangement for each project. Some projects involve a royalty arrangement while others involve stock options, i.e., equity in the firm.

Jobs and income will be generated as the commodities are taken from the farm gate through the processors, to the wholesalers and retailers. If all 23 funded projects are successful, an estimated 1,700 jobs would result. If these projects create whole new industries--which some will--many more jobs would be created in the future.

Other USDA agencies exhibiting on March 17 include: Office of Energy, Cooperative State Research Service, Agricultural Research Service, Economic Research Service and the Forest Service. The Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency will also exhibit.

Eleven of the 23 AARC Center funded projects will be represented. These include:

- Using milkweed fibers to fill "Ogallala Down" pillows.
- Formulating a new environmentally safe form release oil for concrete construction from canola oil.
- Using kenaf, a new bamboo-like crop, to build strong, lightweight stage sets and exhibit backdrops for stage shows, as paper and as biodegradable lawn mats for planting grass seeds.
- High performance lubricating oils from renewable oilseeds crops like rapeseed and crambe for smoother running transmissions and cleaner air and water.
- Using low grade wool as an oil adsorbent.
- Testing the use of vegetable oils to lessen marine, forest and air pollution.
- Bio-diesel made from soybeans to help meet Clean Air Act standards.
- Windshield washer solvent from corn which is non-toxic and biodegradable.
- A new, durable composite material that looks like polished granite made from soybean meal and old newspapers.

Other agencies and departments will exhibit:

- A shrub (guayule) to replace natural rubber.
- Degradable plastics for use by the U.S. Navy.
- Alternative fuel vehicles.
- Ethanol produced from biomass.
- Recycling forest wastes into paper and composites.
- Methane produced from animal waste.





Release No. 0160.94  
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### **ESPY NAMES MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES TO AMERICAN EGG BOARD**

WASHINGTON, March 1--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has named nine members and nine alternates to the American Egg Board. Each will serve two-year terms, ending Dec. 31, 1995.

Newly appointed members and alternates, by region, are:

South Atlantic states -- David O. Lappin, Piedmont, S.C., member.

East North Central States -- Alfred J. Schimpf, Dousman, Wis., member.

West North Central states -- Colleen B. Anderson, Sioux Rapids, Iowa., member; Bill L. Goucher, Plymouth, Minn., alternate.

Western states -- Mark Rubinstein, Norco, Calif., member; Arnold J. Riebli, Sonoma, Calif., alternate.

Reappointed members and alternates, by region, are:

North Atlantic states -- Jerry Kil, Ledyard, Conn., member; Paul D. Sauder, Lititz, Pa., alternate.

South Atlantic states -- James R. Biggers, Polk City, Fla., member; Richard L. Simpson, Monroe, N.C., alternate; Vince L. Booker, Flowery Branch, Ga., alternate.

East North Central states -- Chris G. Dixon, Breese, Ill., alternate.

South Central states -- R. Kenneth Looper, Jackson, Miss., member; Hank Novak, Flatonia, Texas, alternate; Melvin D. Russell, Collierville, Tenn., member; Hershel W. Smith, Hope, Ark., alternate.

Western states -- James S. West, Modesto, Calif., member; Charles C. Campbell, Encinitas, Calif., alternate.

Membership terms on the 18-member board are staggered so that half of the membership is appointed each year in order to provide continuity in policy.

The board administers an egg research and promotion program authorized by the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act of 1974. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service reviews the program's budget, plans, and projects to assure that it operates in the public interest.

The program is funded entirely by a five-cent-per-30-dozen case assessment on eggs marketed by egg producers with flocks of more than 30,000 hens.



Release No. 0162.94  
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

### **CCC INTEREST RATE FOR MARCH 3-3/4 PERCENT**

WASHINGTON, March 1--Commodity loans distributed in March by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 3-3/4 percent interest rate, according to Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of the CCC.

The 3-3/4 percent interest rate is up from February's 3-5/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in March.



Release No. 0163.94  
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 Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623

# **USDA ANNOUNCES 1994 EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE FOR FROZEN POULTRY**

WASHINGTON, March 1--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced a multi-country package of initiatives under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program to encourage sales of 38,000 metric tons of U.S. frozen poultry, effective immediately.

The new package of frozen poultry initiatives to five countries or regions replaces all EEP frozen initiatives announced previously. The new initiatives will remain in effect through December 31, 1994. The package of initiatives announced today, in metric tons, includes:

<u>COUNTRY OR REGION</u>	<u>METRIC TONS</u>
Saudi Arabia	10,000
Gulf States (5)	10,000
Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman	
Qatar, United Arab Emirates	
Singapore	3,000
Egypt	15,000
Total	38,000

Sales of frozen poultry will be made to buyers in all countries announced today through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. The export sales will be facilitated with cash bonus payments. The subsidy will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in these markets.

EEP invitations for each of the countries will be issued immediately. For more information, call Janet M. Kavan, (202) 720-5540 or L.T. McElvain, (202) 720-6211.



Release No. 0164.94  
 Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

# **USDA ANNOUNCES 1994 ACREAGE ALLOTMENTS, PRICE SUPPORT FOR 6 KINDS OF TOBACCO**

WASHINGTON, March 1 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced allotments and price support levels for six kinds of tobacco for the 1994 marketing year.

The 1994 allotments and support levels are included in the following table for comparison:

Kind of Tobacco	National Allotment		Support Level		Marketing Assessment		
	(Acres)		(\$/lb.)		Growers Buyers Total		
	1993	1994	1993	1994	(cents/lb.)		
Va. fire-cured	1,472	1,549	1.395	1.407	0.7035	0.7035	1.407 (type 21)
Ky.-Tenn.	16,910	17,758	1.464	1.483	0.7415	0.7415	1.483 (Fire-cured-types 22-23)
Dark air-cured	5,312	5,036	1.255	1.273	0.6365	0.6365	1.273 (types 35-36)
Va. sun-cured	99	102	1.233	1.245	0.6225	0.6225	1.245 (type 37)
Cigar filler & binder	7,246	4,949	1.074	1.084	0.5420	0.5420	1.084 (types 42-44 & 53-55)
Cigar filler	0	0	.834	.844	0.4220	0.4220	.844 (type 46)

The price support levels for 1994 range between 0.9 and 1.4 percent higher than the 1993-crop levels. The cooperative marketing associations, through which price support is made available to eligible producers, are authorized to request a reduction in the price support level to improve the marketability of the tobacco.

USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation will establish individual grade loan rates before the marketing season begins.

The 1994-crop marketing assessment to be paid by both growers and buyers will be 0.5 percent of the support level for a total of 1 percent per pound.

Except for farms on which producers in recent years have planted or received planted credit of less than 75 percent of the farm's acreage allotment, 1994 tobacco allotments are increased 5 percent for Virginia fire-cured, Virginia sun-cured, and Kentucky-Tennessee fire-cured tobacco, while tobacco allotments are decreased 5 percent for dark air-cured tobacco and 30 percent for cigar filler and binder tobacco, and remain the same for Puerto Rican cigar filler tobacco.

USDA will hold two separate referenda for producers to determine whether growers want marketing quotas for marketing years 1994, 1995 and 1996. Growers of both fire-cured (types 21-23) and dark air-cured (types 35-36) tobacco will vote by mail ballot March 28-31. If more than one-third of the tobacco producers who vote in a separate referendum oppose quotas, marketing quotas of that kind of tobacco will not be in effect for the 1994 marketing year. Quotas for the 1991-1993 crops of fire-cured (types 21-23) and dark air-cured (types 35-36) were approved in a 1991 referendum.

Notices of the 1994 allotments for individual farms and voting information will be mailed to producers by USDA's county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committees.



Release No. 0165.94

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## **USDA PROPOSES TO DECLARE AUSTRIA FREE OF THREE COMMUNICABLE LIVESTOCK DISEASES**

WASHINGTON, March 1--The U.S. Department of Agriculture proposed today to declare Austria free of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), swine vesicular disease (SVD), and rinderpest, three communicable livestock diseases.

"This proposal would allow fresh, chilled and frozen meats and dairy products from ruminant animals to be imported into the United States from Austria under restrictions," said Donald W. Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. However, because there is limited U.S. demand to import these products from Austria, the proposal is not expected to have a major impact on current trade patterns, Luchsinger said.

APHIS will consider declaring a country free of FMD, SVD and rinderpest if no cases of the diseases were reported and no animals were vaccinated for the diseases for at least one year. Austria has not had a case of rinderpest, a viral disease of cattle and bison, since 1921. Vaccinations for FMD, a highly infectious disease of cattle and other cloven-hoofed animals, ended in 1981, during the last outbreak of this disease in Austria. The last outbreak of SVD occurred there in 1979.

APHIS' National Center for Import and Export reviewed the application and documentation supplied by the Austrian government. A team of APHIS officials also traveled to Austria to evaluate the capability of the country's veterinary services, laboratory and diagnostic procedures, vaccination practices and enforcement of animal health regulations. This review confirmed that Austria has eradicated FMD, SVD, and rinderpest.



Although Austria appears to qualify for disease-free status, some conditions in this country pose an undue risk that Austrian exports could be exposed to similiar products from countries that have FMD, SVD or rinderpest, said Luchsinger.

Austria shares borders with and imports meat from countries that still have these diseases. To ensure against the introduction of these diseases into the United States, all meat (including airplane meals and ship stores) and animal products must be accompanied by documents certified by an Austrian veterinary official. The documents must state that the export product has not been commingled or exposed to similar products from countries that have any of these diseases. Meat and animal products exported to the United States also must be prepared in an establishment that meets the USDA's meat inspection requirements. Swine and certain pork exports will remain prohibited from entering the United States because hog cholera exists in Austria, Luchsinger said.

This proposal is scheduled for publication in the March 2 Federal Register. To comment, send an original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-173-1 on or before May 2 to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments once received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 So. Bldg., 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to the reading room are requested to call (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry.



Release No. 0166.94  
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## **USDA PROPOSES TO DECLARE HUNGARY FREE OF TWO COMMUNICABLE LIVESTOCK DISEASES**

WASHINGTON, March 1--The U.S. Department of Agriculture proposed today to declare Hungary free of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and rinderpest, two communicable livestock diseases.

"This proposal would allow fresh, chilled and frozen meats and dairy products from ruminant animals to be imported into the United States from Hungary under restrictions," said Donald W. Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. However, because there is limited U.S. demand to import these products from Hungary, the proposal is not expected to have a major impact on current trade patterns, Luchsinger said.

APHIS will consider declaring a country free of FMD and rinderpest if no cases of the diseases were reported and no animals were vaccinated for the diseases for at least one year. Hungary has not had a case of rinderpest, a viral disease of cattle and bison, since 1921. A limited vaccination program for FMD, a highly infectious disease of cattle and other cloven-hoofed animals, ended there in 1989. The last FMD outbreak in that country was in 1973.

APHIS' National Center for Import and Export reviewed the application and documentation supplied by the Hungarian government. A team of APHIS officials also traveled to Hungary to evaluate the capability of the country's veterinary services, laboratory and diagnostic procedures, vaccination practices and enforcement of animal health regulations. This review confirmed that Hungary has eradicated FMD. Under APHIS rules, Hungary must have eradicated FMD in order to be declared free of rinderpest.

Although Hungary appears to qualify for disease-free status, some conditions in this country pose an undue risk that exports could be exposed to or commingled with similiar products from countries that have FMD or rinderpest, Luchsinger said.

Hungary shares borders with and imports meats from countries that still have these diseases. To ensure against the introduction of rinderpest or FMD into the United States, all meat (including airplane meals and ship stores) and animal products must be accompanied by documents certified by a Hungarian veterinary official. The documents must state that the export product has not been commingled with or exposed to similiar products from countries that have these diseases. Meat and animal products exported to the United States from Hungary also must be prepared in an establishment that meets the USDA's meat inspection requirements, Luchsinger said.

This proposal is scheduled for publication in the March 2 Federal Register. To comment, send an original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-172-1 on or before May 2 to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments once received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, So. Bldg., 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to the reading room are requested to call (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry.



Release No. 0167.94  
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## USDA ASSISTS WITH RESTORING POWER TO STORM-RAVAGED COMMUNITIES

### (Espy Starts Up Toll-Free Hotline To Assist Ice Storm Victims)

WASHINGTON, March 1 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy today dispatched Wally Beyer, the head of the Rural Electrification Administration, to storm-damaged areas in Mississippi and Tennessee to assess efforts to date in restoring power to homes and businesses served by USDA-borrower electric cooperatives.

On Wednesday, March 2, Beyer will tour Lyon, Batesville and Greenwood, Mississippi, and on Thursday, March 3, he will tour Brownsville and Somerville in Tennessee.

Espy also has opened an emergency response line to provide information on USDA disaster assistance programs. The toll-free number is 1-800-880-4183.

Espy, who toured the affected areas in Mississippi over the weekend, said, "We are continuing in our efforts to help families in ice-damaged communities get back on their feet and get their homes and businesses back on the power lines. As damage assessments are concluded, we stand ready to bring in additional assistance from clearing debris to repairing fences, and we will be there as long as needed."

Currently, REA is providing technical support, cash-flow assistance and information to the agency's borrowers who provide power to the affected communities. In Mississippi, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service has provided \$6,288,428 in benefits to 29,991 households. These benefits include replacements for lost food or lost food stamps and commodities distributed by disaster-relief organizations.

The brutal winter storms earlier this month caused extensive damage in many parts of the southeast. Downed trees and snapped utility poles have left many areas without electricity. Considerable damage to the pecan crop has been reported and many areas are strewn with debris.

President Clinton has declared 68 counties in Tennessee and 26 counties in northern Mississippi disaster areas, making them eligible for federal assistance.





Release No. 0169.94  
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## **USDA TO AMEND TWO MILK MARKETING ORDERS**

WASHINGTON, March 2--The U.S. Department of Agriculture will adopt multiple component pricing for the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern Idaho-Eastern Oregon federal milk marketing orders.

The Pacific Northwest order comprises Washington State, the western half of Oregon and the Idaho panhandle. The Southwestern Idaho-Eastern Oregon order includes the Boise, Idaho, area.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the decision to amend these two milk marketing orders by adopting multiple component pricing is based on testimony received at a Portland, Ore. hearing held in September 1992.

Multiple component pricing was introduced in the Great Basin Federal milk marketing order in 1988. Under this type of pricing, the amount paid farmers is based on the components of the milk most valued for milk product manufacturing in the markets receiving that milk, Hatamiya said.

Since the Pacific Northwest market produces large amounts of butter and nonfat dry milk, the components to be priced will be nonfat milk solids and butterfat. In the cheese-making Southwestern Idaho-Eastern Oregon market, protein and butterfat content will be priced to reflect the higher cheese yield of high protein milk.

USDA also adopted two additional amendments to the Pacific Northwest order only. One amendment reduces the amount of milk that the order's "supply plants" (plants receiving milk directly from farms for redistribution to other plants) must ship to share in the benefits of the milk order.

A supply plant requirement assures enough milk for essential uses such as drinking. The current 30 percent requirement in the Pacific Northwest order will drop to 20 percent because increased milk production near the bottling plants is being delivered directly to them.

The other amendment concerns the status of the Washington State Reformatory's dairy plant, which bottles the reformatory's milk production. The plant sometimes supplements its supply with milk from other sources. Currently, the plant is subject to certain regulations if it obtains 100 pounds of milk daily from regulated sources, such as any federal milk order. Under the amended order, the plant will be exempted from these regulations unless it purchases over 1,000 pounds of milk daily from such sources.

Producers in the two milk marketing areas must vote on the amendments. USDA will implement the revised orders if two-thirds of the producers voting in each market favor them.

The final decision amending the orders was published in the Feb. 23 Federal Register. Additional information and single copies of the decision are available from the Order Formulation Branch, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2968-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-4829, or from the Federal Milk Marketing Administrator, 16 West Harrison Street, Suite 100, Seattle, Wash. 98199-4121, telephone (206) 282-1664.



Release No. 0170.94  
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## **USDA'S RESEARCH AGENCY PRESENTS NEW PRODUCT TECHNOLOGY TO CONGRESS**

WASHINGTON, March 2--U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists at Weslaco, Texas have developed a new method to protect grapefruit from Mexican fruit flies, Essex Finney, acting head of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, told Congress today.



Finney said hot, forced air kills the fruit fly larvae in grapefruit that has been harvested. This new control has been approved by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Finney discussed the new treatment as one of 11 products generated from research by the agency's scientists and presented at a budget hearing of the House Committee on Appropriation's Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies. The treatment could provide an alternative to fumigation with methyl bromide. Use of methyl bromide is scheduled to be discontinued after the year 2001.

Other products identified in Finney's report included:

\*Muffins made with oatrim, developed from oat starch by an ARS scientist. A study by the ARS Human Nutrition Research Center in Beltsville, Md., showed that oatrim reduces cholesterol and lowers blood glucose linked to the risk of diabetes. An unexpected payoff: most of the volunteers lost weight even though they increased their calorie intake. Two partnerships in the food industry have exclusive licenses to make and market oatrim: Quaker Oats with France's Rhone-Poulenc and ConAgra with A.E. Staley of Great Britain. Oatrim was developed at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, Ill.

\*Pizza topped with a mozzarella cheese that has less than 10 percent fat, compared with 23 percent in full-fat mozzarella. Developed at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center in Philadelphia, Pa., this all-natural new cheese is superior in flavor, melting qualities and texture to commercial, reduced-fat mozzarella cheeses. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is evaluating the new product in Philadelphia public schools.

\*Oranges covered with a new coating that will keep them fresh for up to three weeks at room temperature. Fruit treated with commercially available coatings look shrunken and discolored after three weeks. All the ingredients in the coating are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Scientists at the Citrus and Subtropical Products Research Laboratory in Winter Haven, Fla., developed the coating and are applying for a patent.

\*Biodegradable knives, forks and spoons made with a starch-polyester material. ARS scientists have developed various starch-polyester compositions that can be used for cutlery and other one-time-use plastic items now made from petroleum. Totally biodegradable plastics are being sought to replace petroleum-based plastics that now make up about 25 percent of the volume of landfills. The research was done at the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, Peoria, Ill.

\*A new russet potato, grown without pesticides, that resists major potato viruses, Verticillium wilt, early blight, black dot and common powdery scab. It produces french fries superior to those of the standard Russet Burbank, and is higher in protein and vitamin C. ARS scientists at the Prosser, Wash., Vegetable and Forage Crops Production Research Laboratory developed the potato with the Washington State Potato Commission and other federal and state researchers.

\*PESTA, a non-toxic and biodegradable biopesticide product containing natural microorganisms that kill weeds or insects. At the ARS Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans, La., scientists developed a process that encapsulates beneficial microorganisms in granules made from wheat flour. The flour feeds weed-killing fungi that rapidly grow on the granules. These fungi produce even more beneficial spores after rain or irrigation. Also, insect-killing nematodes can be added to PESTA.

\*Delicious, wholesome snacks of sunflower seeds, bits of wheat and potato chips covered with milk chocolate. Research at the Northern Crop Science Laboratory in Fargo, N.D., has resulted in the release of productive, high-quality varieties of sunflower and wheat that resist a variety of plant diseases. Scientists are also working on a natural method to suppress premature sprouting in stored potatoes.

\*A new bait that controls roaches, made with compounds from a new family of insecticides called fluorosulfonates. Discovered and patented by ARS scientists at the Medical and Veterinary Entomology Research Laboratory in Gainesville, Fla., these new compounds are effective against cockroaches, ants, termites and other insects that live in groups or colonies. Worker insects carry the insecticide back to nests. Fluorosulfonates are synthetic compounds originally used to disperse chemicals in oil, water or other formulations.

\*Commercially available peach preserves, an indirect product of the peach breeding program conducted over the years at the ARS Southeastern Fruit and Tree Nut Research Laboratory in Byron, Ga. In cooperation with the Clemson University Agricultural Experiment Station, ARS scientists at Byron released new rootstock in 1993 for peach and related species that has resistance to Peach Tree Short Life. This disease, present in almost every orchard in the southeastern United States, costs peach growers millions of dollars each year.

\*A test kit for trichinosis, a disease that occurs in the United States primarily from eating raw or undercooked pork, and is caused by a tiny parasitic worm. ARS scientists at the Beltsville, Md., Animal Parasitology Unit designed and helped commercialize the test that can detect the parasite by using a single drop of an infected pig's blood. The test is also being used by physicians to diagnose human infections.



Release No. 0171.94  
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## **USDA PROPOSES TO REMOVE CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS OF FETAL BOVINE SERUM**

WASHINGTON, March 2--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed to allow fetal bovine serum to be imported under strict conditions into the United States from countries considered to be affected with foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) or rinderpest, two communicable livestock diseases.

"Current amounts of fetal bovine serum available for U.S. research laboratories and biologic manufacturers do not adequately meet their needs for an affordable, pathogen-free continuous supply," said Donald W. Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "Our proposal intends to open opportunities for more imports of this important animal product to help meet this demand."

Fetal bovine serum is the clear, yellowish liquid portion of blood obtained from bovine fetuses after the solid blood cells are removed. The serum is used to make tissue culture media and various pharmaceutical and biological products, such as vaccines. There is no synthetic substitute.

Domestic production of fetal bovine serum is estimated to range from 200,000 to 250,000 liters per year. The cost per liter is between \$200 to \$500. Luchsinger said that increased importation of fetal bovine serum should lower the U.S. price, benefitting research laboratories and vaccine manufacturers.

Although fetal bovine serum is available from sources outside of the United States, many countries that could export it are unable to because of the current disease quarantines for FMD and rinderpest, as well as for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

The proposal would amend USDA's regulations to allow fetal bovine serum to be imported under certain conditions from a country that has FMD or rinderpest, but not BSE. The required conditions for importation include treatment of the serum by irradiation in the United States.

Research has shown that gamma irradiation treatment of fetal bovine serum destroys the FMD and rinderpest viruses, while retaining a useable product. There is no equivalent treatment for destroying the agent that causes BSE.

Because of the effectiveness of this technology, the proposal would allow the serum to be imported from countries affected by rinderpest and FMD if the serum is prepared for export using specific procedures designed to reduce the risk of introduction of BSE. These methods include requiring that the blood be collected from bovine fetuses at a USDA-certified slaughtering plant. A certified slaughtering plant is one that has been approved by USDA inspectors in meeting sanitation standards for exporting meat products to the United States under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. To retain such export eligibility, the facility could not let domestic meat products commingle with meat products of other countries. This would help to reduce the risk of BSE contamination.



The blood would also have to be collected from fetuses whose mothers have passed official veterinary food safety inspections and have never been in a country where BSE exists. After collection, the blood must be shipped in leak-proof containers to a processing facility located in the same country as the slaughterhouse. The serum must also be removed from the blood by filtering.

Any commingling of this serum with other serums that have not met all of the preceding collection requirements would be forbidden. Prospective importers of fetal bovine serum would have to obtain an import permit from APHIS in advance. All such shipments to the United States would require leak-proof containers. APHIS inspectors would confirm the identity of the shipment upon arrival and place it under agency-inspection seal for movement to an APHIS-approved irradiation facility.

This proposal was published in the Feb. 25 Federal Register. To submit a written comment, send an original and three copies referring to docket number 89-174-1 on or before April 26 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, Program and Policy Development, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments once received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th and Independence, Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to the reading room are requested to call (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry.



Release No. 0172.94  
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Larry Mark (202) 720-3310

#### **USDA PROPOSES TO ALLOW HAWAIIAN AVOCADOS TO ENTER ALASKA**

WASHINGTON, March 2--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that it is proposing to allow avocados to be imported from Hawaii into Alaska.

"The climatic conditions in Alaska ensure that pests of avocados would not threaten agriculture in that state," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator of the plant protection and quarantine program in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "This proposal relieves some restrictions on the interstate movement of avocados from Hawaii without presenting a significant risk of introducing exotic pests into the continental United States."

Under the proposed regulations, APHIS will only allow commercial shipments of Hawaiian avocados to be sold in Alaska markets. The Hawaiian avocados will be allowed entry at Alaskan ports and at Portland, Ore., or Seattle, Wash., where they will be subject to strict transit restrictions. Boxes are to be marked for distribution in Alaska only.

"In the unlikely event that an infested avocado entered Alaska from Hawaii, the pest would not survive the severe cold," said Lee.

The proposed changes to APHIS's fruit and vegetable regulations were published in the Feb. 25 Federal Register. Written comments on the revisions will be accepted until April 26. Send an original and three copies of comments referring to docket number 93-088-1 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 So. Bldg, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.





#### **USDA TO CONTINUE OPTIONS PILOT PROGRAM IN 1994**

WASHINGTON, March 2--U.S. Department of Agriculture ASCS Administrator Grant Buntrock today said the Options Pilot Program will be continued for 1994 crops. The program was authorized by the 1990 farm bill to provide federal support for commodities by purchasing options contracts and first offered by USDA in 1993.

Corn producers in three counties each in Illinois, Indiana and Iowa, soybean producers in the same three Illinois counties and wheat producers in 2 counties each in Kansas and North Dakota will be eligible to participate.

"This program is being continued to encourage producers to use options contracts for income and price support," Buntrock said. "Producers who participate will achieve protection equivalent to the target price and price support loan levels for commodities they produce."

The Illinois counties are Champaign, Logan and Shelby for corn and soybean participation. For corn participation only: Carroll, Clinton and Tippecanoe in Indiana and Boone, Grundy and Hardin in Iowa. The participating counties in Kansas are Ford and Thomas for hard red winter wheat and, in North Dakota, Barnes and Grand Forks for hard red spring wheat.

Producers may participate in the pilot program at levels that are alternative protection to either: (1) full target price protection of deficiency payments and price support loans, or, (2) price support loans.

In addition to a payment to cover the option premium, participants will receive an incentive payment of 5 cents per bushel to encourage participation and cover transaction fees and other costs.

The target rate strike price for wheat and corn for 1994 have been set at \$4.20 and \$2.90 per bushel, respectively. These are the same rates as were set for the 1993 program. Loan rate strike prices will be announced at a later date.

Participants may enroll up to 50,000 bushels of corn and up to 15,000 bushels each of wheat and soybeans in the pilot program. Enrollment will be at county offices of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service at the same time as signup for the 1994 Acreage Reduction Program, March 1 through April 29.



Release No. 0177.94  
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#### **USDA ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION ON HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT SYSTEMS SET FOR MARCH 30-31**

WASHINGTON, March 3--The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a round-table discussion on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems for meat and poultry plants on March 30-31 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 400 New Jersey Ave., NW, Washington, D.C.

The session is open to the public.

"We have chosen this type of forum because it will allow open and frank discussion of all issues relative to a HACCP system," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. "HACCP is universally known as a process control system that can improve food safety systems. The round table will help us review all aspects of issues concerning the use of this system in Federally inspected meat and poultry plants.

"A HACCP system is one of several initiatives we are undertaking to improve inspection and the safety of the nation's meat and poultry supply. We hope HACCP will complement our current system."

Round-table participants selected under a process announced Jan. 13 (USDA press release 0039.94) include public health officials and representatives from the meat and poultry industry, consumer groups, scientists and professional scientific organizations, producer and farmer groups, USDA and other federal, state and local employees.

Specific issues for the round-table discussion on HACCP will be determined by a steering committee that will be comprised of round-table participants.



Release No. 0179.94  
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### **USDA TAKES ACTION TO FIGHT ABUSE OF FmHA RURAL HOUSING PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, March 3 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy today revealed that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is investigating developers for suspected abuse of funds in a rural housing program and is conducting a review of safety and health conditions of 16,500 department-financed rural housing developments across the nation.

The action was sparked by a preliminary survey requested by Espy which found apparent abuse of government funds by some project developers. The abuse in some cases has resulted in deteriorating and uninhabitable conditions. The preliminary survey indicated at least 46 housing projects throughout the nation with apparent hazardous health and safety conditions.

The nationwide review of developments five years or older is scheduled to be completed in June. Once the review is complete, each state will be required to submit a plan of action to the national FmHA office to address any problems found.

"We will not allow misuse of government funds or mismanagement of government-financed projects," said Espy, who is undertaking steps to reform the Section 515 Rural Housing Program administered by USDA's Farmers Home Administration. "We will not allow a much needed program providing housing for low-income rural families to be abused. Our preliminary survey indicated only a small percentage of problem developments, yet any abuse is unacceptable and all residents deserve safe and sanitary housing."

Some of the actions directed by Espy to address abuse of the housing program include:

◆ Where abuse is suspected, Espy has directed FmHA to investigate the developers and has asked the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of the Inspector General to assist with the investigations. Criminal action will be sought if necessary and if abuse is found, FmHA will seek to take over the management of the property or seek a receiver through the courts.

◆ Espy has directed the national office of the FmHA to form special review teams to inspect housing projects in states with numerous problem projects.

◆ Regulations are being revised to prevent borrowers who have abused the program from continuing to profit from the developments. Customarily, borrowers can transfer the property to new owners, and as part of the agreement, they can benefit from tax breaks given for rehabilitation of the housing units. Espy has directed FmHA to disallow transfers that will benefit the original borrowers who have a history of abusing the program.

Current regulations allow FmHA to debar developers found guilty of abusing the program.

Espy began taking action to address abuse in the Section 515 program after receiving reports from the newly appointed state FmHA directors that some housing units had been allowed to deteriorate.



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Current regulations allow FmHA to debar developers found guilty of abusing the program.

Espy began taking action to address abuse in the Section 515 program after receiving reports from the newly appointed state FmHA directors that some housing units had been allowed to deteriorate.

Review teams have already visited projects in some states where safety and health hazards have been found.

The reform and review of the Section 515 Rural Housing Program is another step by the secretary to address all abuse and mismanagement of USDA programs. Recently, Espy formed the Loan Resolution Task Force that will seek to resolve outstanding loans from delinquent FmHA borrowers.



Release No. 0181.94  
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### **NEEM OIL PROTECTS FLOWERING PLANTS AGAINST DISEASES**

WASHINGTON, March 3--Raindrops falling on the leaves of ornamentals like roses and lilacs can spread nasty fungi to these and other flowering plants. But U.S. Department of Agriculture research shows that oil from a tropical tree stops fungi from infecting the plants.

James C. Locke, a research plant pathologist, said the oil is extracted from seeds of the neem tree native to India. A spray of one-percent neem oil in water "acts like a raincoat" against spores of fungi that are spread by splashing raindrops and wind, he said.

Locke said the oil is the first botanical product to exhibit fungicidal properties and potential use as an alternative to chemical fungicides. On ornamentals, the oil extract protects against diseases like powdery mildew and rust that discolor leaves, at times frustrating gardeners into buying new plants.

"If the spores can't adhere to a leaf, germinate and penetrate the cells, they can't cause disease," said Locke of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. A one-percent spray gave 95 to 100 percent protection to hydrangeas, lilacs and phlox against powdery mildew in numerous field tests. They were run over the past four years by Locke and colleagues in the agency's Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit at the Beltsville, Md. research center.

A single spray application was sufficient to protect these plants, including times when plants were prone to infection, he said. Additional applications at 7- to 14-day intervals were tried without any damage to the plants, he added.

On plants where mildew had begun to develop, "it was arrested," Locke said. "Neem oil provided control comparable to each of three chemical fungicides."

He said neem seeds also are the source of azadirachtin, the active ingredient in seven botanical insecticides. Azadirachtin is an ethanol extract from neem seeds, but it does not have fungicidal activity.

Locke is testing the oil as a fungicide under a cooperative research and development agreement with W.R. Grace and Company, Columbia, Md.

Locke's neem studies are the latest in a line of research that ARS scientists have pursued on uses of the tree's botanical properties in agriculture. Agency scientists in the 1970's identified azadirachtin and ran tests that led to its introduction as a commercial insecticide.

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**NOTE TO EDITOR:** *Contact for details James C. Locke, plant pathologist, Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit, U.S. National Arboretum, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Beltsville, Md. Telephone: (301) 504-6413.*





Release No. 0184.94  
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 Maria Bynum (202) 720-5192

## USDA INTRODUCES NEW CITRUS FRUIT FOR BREEDING

WASHINGTON, March 4--It looks like a giant grapefruit and is the color of a lemon, but it is neither. It's a pummelo--an exotic subtropical citrus fruit being cultivated by a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

Not well known in the United States, the pummelo has been highly prized in the Orient for years, said Herb C. Barrett, a plant geneticist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Barrett grows pummelo at the ARS Horticultural Research Laboratory at Orlando, Fla.

Barrett's pummelo germplasm came from seed planted in 1947 at the Orlando lab. He began evaluating seedlings from pummelo germplasm in 1976 and selected one--US 145--for further breeding in 1981.

"US 145 is a germplasm breeding line, not a commercial citrus variety," Barrett cautioned. The difference is that plant breeders will use the germplasm to develop a variety that growers could use to produce a commercial crop, he said.

"Pummelo fruit is light yellow, sweet and solid, and you eat it by sections that pull apart easily," explained Barrett. Also known as shaddock, the sphere-shaped fruit typically weigh about 3 pounds each, measure about 6 to 8 inches in diameter and have a smooth, half- to three- quarters-inch-thick lemon-yellow rind. Depending on size, the fruit can cost as much as \$3 each.

Barrett said that it takes from 5 to 8 years from planting pummelo seedlings to harvest. The trees grow from 20 to about 40 feet tall, with leaves that look somewhat like grapefruit tree leaves, but are broader with large bladed stems and a downy underside.

Since the pummelo is believed to be native to Malaysia and Indonesia, Barrett said it would probably grow in places like southern Florida and parts of California, where the climate is subtropical.

In protected locations in Florida, US 145 has fruited well each year, Barrett said. It also has shown superior ability to produce selections that combine edibility and cold hardiness. These selections came from hybrids with one-quarter Poncirus trifoliata inheritance. Also known as trifoliate orange, *P. trifoliata* bears inedible fruit, but it is extremely cold hardy and serves as a good rootstock.

Perishability of pummelo is similar to that of grapefruit, and single trees growing at the research station bear moderate crops of fruit, Barrett said. #

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** *For details, contact Herb C. Barrett, research plant geneticist, or Randall E. Driggers, horticulturist, U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Orlando, Fla. 32803. Telephone: (904) 787-6668.*

*Color slides are available from the USDA-ARS Photography Unit, 6303 Ivy Lane, Greenbelt, Md. Telephone: (301) 344-2900.*





Release No. 0187.94  
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## **USDA DECLARES EMERGENCY IN NORTH CAROLINA FOR ASIAN GYPSY MOTH**

WASHINGTON, March 4--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared an emergency due to an infestation of Asian gypsy moths discovered near Wilmington, N.C., and has made \$7.4 million available for eradication activities.

"This exotic pest is capable of devastating forests, woodlands and residential landscapes," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. "Eradication is necessary to protect the U.S. timber and forest industry, delicate forest ecosystems, and recreational parks, woodlands and communities.

"The economic impact of Asian gypsy moth establishment in the United States would be devastating," Espy said. "Losses due to defoliation of both hardwoods and conifers could exceed \$1 billion over the next 40 years.

"We must ensure that North Carolina has resources necessary to combat this serious problem."

Two USDA agencies--the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Forest Service--in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture have organized a survey and eradication project team. The \$7.4 million announced today will be used for eradication activities in North Carolina during 1994.

Unlike the European strain of gypsy moth established in the Northeast, the Asian female moth can fly long distances, enabling an infestation to spread quickly. The Asian strain also feeds on conifers, unlike the European strain. More than 400 species of trees and shrubs are at risk from Asian gypsy moths.

Asian gypsy moths were introduced in North Carolina when moths flew off a cargo ship docked at Sunny Point, N.C., in the summer of 1993. The ship was carrying infested military cargo containers from Germany.

Egg masses were collected from the containers and will be monitored to determine when these eggs hatch into larvae (caterpillars). Eradication activities will begin at that time--projected to be in early spring--and will target the caterpillars during their destructive feeding phase.

USDA's official declaration of emergency is tentatively scheduled to be published in the March 9 Federal Register.



## **Program Announcements-**

Release No. 0161.94  
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Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

## **USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES**

WASHINGTON, March 1--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels: 12.20 cents per pound
- medium grain whole kernels: 11.52 cents per pound
- short grain whole kernels: 11.38 cents per pound
- broken kernels: 6.10 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are zero.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made March 8 at 3 p.m. EST.



Release No. 0182.94  
Minnie Tom Meyer (202) 720-6734  
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## USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, March 3--Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, March 10. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, March 4 through midnight Thursday, March 10.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. Because this week's calculated AWP is equal to 131.2 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, a further adjustment cannot be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price	
NE Price .....	82.42
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location .....	11.91
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton .....	1.50
Avg. U.S. location .....	0.31
Sum of Adjustments .....	<u>- 13.72</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE .....	68.70 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
NE Price .....	82.42
NE Coarse Count Price .....	<u>- 79.57</u>
	2.85
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton .....	<u>- 3.20</u>
	- 0.35
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT .....	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is above 52.35 cents per pound--the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years--the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the loan rate, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is above the 1993-crop loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available during this period.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks; however, today's announced AWP is greater than 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is zero. In order for payments to be made under the user marketing certificate program, the announced AWP must be less than 130 percent of the base loan rate for four consecutive weeks. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	AWP (Announced) As Percent of Loan Rate	USNE Price .....	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate .....
1	Feb. 10, 1994	126.7	81.65	80.03	0.37
2	Feb. 17, 1994	128.3	82.30	80.86	0.19
3	Feb. 24, 1994	129.5	83.35	81.52	0.58
4	Mar. 3, 1994	131.2	84.75	82.42	0

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, March 10, at 5 p.m.



## Features-

Release No. 0176.94  
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### A New Agricultural Product

#### **RECYCLED, RENEWABLE "ENVIRON" FROM MINNESOTA**

WASHINGTON, March 2 -- Mixing used newspapers with this country's abundant supply of soybean meal creates a versatile new material for a wide range of uses. At the same time, it promises to create new jobs and economic activity in rural America.

The composite material combines the easy-working properties of wood with the appearance and sales-appeal of polished granite.

With economic and environmental benefits in sight, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center is providing funds to support development of the new product, "Environ," made by Phenix Composites, Inc. of Mankato, Minn. The Center funds projects that will expand industrial and commercial uses of agricultural and forest products.

Environ began with a schoolgirl's sixth-grade science fair project. Her experiment with old newspapers and her mom's kitchen blender wrecked the blender, but she now shares in the patent for "Environ" and owns stock in the company.

Phenix Composites' next step is to move from pilot scale to full production, to fill a promising market in decorative pieces and furniture in a variety of colors. To help make that step, the AARC Center is providing \$1 million to supplement \$1.6 million in new Phenix Composite investment. So far, Phenix Composites has invested \$5.2 million to develop Environ. The AARC Center investment will be repaid out of Environ sales.

Environ is expected to be produced in a network of small plants located throughout rural America to hold down transportation costs. The first Environ manufacturing facility, to be located in the Mankato area, will employ about 60 people. Environ should provide a growing market for the waste paper that represents more than 40 percent of the materials dumped in land fills today. The market for Environ itself should grow rapidly. Being introduced initially for use in furniture and small items, it soon should be available for use as a structural building material for both interior and exterior uses.





Release No. 0178.94  
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### A New Agricultural Product

#### **RODALE-HEADED TEAM TESTS COMPOST BENEFITS**

WASHINGTON, March 3 -- A consortium headed by the non-profit Rodale Institute is investing \$562,000 in an effort to calculate the many benefits of on-farm composting ■ and to discover and deal with any possible problems such as contamination of soils or water supplies with pesticides or heavy metals.

The project is designed to develop improved systems for composting. When properly managed, composting reduces wastes so that it is possible to process and use the compost in ways that help rather than harm the environment. Using natural bacterial action to decompose wastes, composting produces carbon dioxide, water vapor, heat, and stabilized organic matter.

Along with the Rodale Institute of Kutztown, Penn., the research team includes the University of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. Commercial farmers such as Bob Keller in Lititz, Penn., are devoting their time to the project.

To support this research, another \$200,000 is being provided by USDA's Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization (AARC) Center. The Center funds projects that will expand industrial and commercial uses of agricultural and forest products.

Among the expected payoffs from this investment of public funds are:

- ◆ An added-value system for using, instead of land-filling, municipal wastes such as sewage sludge, leaves, and the biodegradable plastics developed by a private company;
- ◆ An additional income source for farmers who may be able to sell the produce as well as using it on their own fields;
- ◆ A reduction in the environmental problems caused by improper disposal that can pollute soil and water, and;
- ◆ Distribution of information about the benefits of organic compost as a soil-enriching, water-saving alternative to synthetic fertilizers produced from non-renewable natural gas.



Release No.0180.94  
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#### **MEAT AND POULTRY HOTLINE ADDRESSES CONCERNS ABOUT CUTTING BOARDS**

WASHINGTON, March 3--Decisions, decisions. Many consumers are becoming more concerned about which type of cutting board to use in the kitchen--plastic, glass, marble or wooden.

A few studies seem to show that wooden cutting boards have properties that may inactivate or kill bacteria that can cause illness, while other research favors the use of the plastic board.

For example, a University of Wisconsin study found that some wooden cutting boards actually kill bacteria that survive well on plastic boards. A recent study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service concluded that bacteria were more difficult to remove from some wooden boards and, therefore, supported using plastic cutting boards for safe food preparation.

Results of the majority of past studies also seem to support the traditional viewpoint that non-porous surfaces such as plastic are more easily cleaned and sanitized than wood.

"In light of these studies, hundreds of people have called our Hotline asking about which type of cutting board to use," said Susan Conley, director of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline. "Many callers are frustrated and ask us which type of cutting board is safer--wood, plastic, marble or glass," she said.

The Hotline is a nationwide toll-free service people can call with food safety and handling questions.

"We continue to advise callers of our long-standing recommendation that when consumers cut meat and poultry, they use cutting boards with unmarred surfaces that are made from easy-to-clean non-porous materials such as plastic, marble or glass," Conley said.

"If a consumer chooses a wooden board, however, the Hotline recommends it be used for specific purposes such as cutting raw meat and poultry, and a separate board be used for preparing all other foods such as vegetables, salads or breads," she added.

"Whatever type of cutting board is used," Conley advised, "it should be kept clean, especially when used to handle raw food. That's the key to food safety."

Conley said that all cutting boards should be washed with hot, soapy water after each use. The board can then be allowed to "air dry," or clean paper towels may be used to pat dry.

The automatic dishwasher is the most effective way to clean cutting boards, and many can be washed in that way. These include the non-porous and solid wooden boards. Dishwashers, however, are not recommended for laminated wood, which can split or separate from the board. Also, thin plastic or wooden boards both may tend to warp somewhat in the dishwasher.

Conley also advised that all cutting boards should be frequently sanitized. To sanitize, two teaspoons of chlorine bleach should be added to a quart of water. The solution can then be used to flood the board's surface. After a few minutes of soaking, the board should be rinsed in clear water before drying by air or with paper towels.

Finally, all cutting boards that become excessively cut or grooved must be replaced.

For further information, call the Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. In the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area, the number is (202) 720-3333.



Release No. 0185.94

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### A New Agricultural Product

#### **WOOL ■ AN ENVIRONMENTAL ANSWER TO OIL SPILLS**

WASHINGTON, March 4 -- Waste wool could turn into the treatment of environmental choice for oil spills and other nasty clean-up problems.

Low-grade wool that currently has no market offers a range of economic and environmental benefits for the clean-up industry:

- as a waste product, it's cheap;
- it is a natural, renewable, and fully biodegradable product;
- it's tough enough to be used under the roughest Arctic conditions;
- it's gentle enough to swab down oiled birds and mammals; and
- best of all, it naturally adsorbs from 10 to 30 times its weight in oil.

As a first step in developing a range of alternative uses for wool, five organizations have joined forces to pool their expertise. The members of the new "Wool Environmental Products Consortium" are Hobbs Bonded Fibers of Mexia, Texas; Western Textile Products Co. of Dallas, Texas; SnugFleece International of Pocatello, Idaho; Texas Tech University of Lubbock, Texas; and the American Wool Council, headquartered in Englewood, Colo.

Together, the consortium members are investing \$716,344 in their first project ■ turning low-grade wool into the traditional booms, pads, socks, and other items used by the clean-up industry to deal with spilled and leaked liquids. To support the project, the Alternative Agriculture Research and Commercialization Center, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is providing \$700,00 as an investment to be repaid from sales of the new products. The Center funds projects that will expand industrial and commercial uses of agricultural and forest products.

The consortium's first step will be to manufacture and test the new wool clean-up materials on a pilot basis. Once floating oil-spill booms and other items are commercially available, the consortium expects rapid industry acceptance based on lower purchase and disposal costs per gallon of oil adsorbed and improved performance compared with current clean-up products.

As an added benefit, the consortium expects its wool pads to be reusable after the collected oil is squeezed out -- and eventually capable of being broken down into polypeptides and amino acids for use as protein concentrate.





